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Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."
JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

"The legislator may think it hard," says General Francis A. Walker, "that his power for good is so closely restricted, but he has no reason to complain of any limits upon his power for evil."

Comrade Cohen's new and cheap edition of "Mutual Banking" may be obtained of William Gilmour, 26 St. Clair Street, Glasgow, Scotland, he having taken the agency for Great Britain.

Readers of Liberty who at any time hereafter may see mention of Colonel Greene's "Mutual Banking" in the press are requested to send the paper containing such mention to Henry Cohen, 1,239 Welton Street, Denver, Colo.

My dear nephew G. E. M., what has come over the spirit of your dream? Are you aware that you have become distressingly and depressingly stupid? The bacillus of Philistine dulness and density seems to have gained a foothold in the recesses of your brain, wherein nothing of a sprightly nature now goes on save the reproductive processes of this phenomenally fecund, but by no means jocund, microbe.

Mr. Salter observes "a little more acuteness than sympathy" in Mr. Yarros's treatment of his book. It's a good fault, Mr. Yarros; don't be in a hurry to reform. Sympathetic people are common; acute people are rare. And I would say to Mr. Salter that I have always found it a tolerably safe rule to patronize the dentist who hurts me the most; as a general thing he does the work that lasts. Bernard Shaw well says that it's of little use to say anything unless you say it in an irritating fashion, for people will not trouble themselves about anything that does not trouble them. I almost thought that Mr. Yarros was too gentle with Mr. Salter. So much depends upon the point of view.

The New York legislature is expected to abolish the anti-suicide section of the criminal code. Physicians and lawyers have passed resolutions declaring anti-suicide laws to be survivals of barbarism and urging their repeal everywhere. They are not only wrong in principle, but entirely inexpedient. They do not act as deterrents, and have no effect, save to increase the care of would-be suicides to avoid failure. A number of States retain such laws on their statute-books, but they have no virtuous and law-abiding officials to enforce them. New York has Goff, the great hysterical moralist, and he has been trying to enforce the anti-suicide law. Of course repeal is desirable in the case, but from the point of view of the social organism it can hardly be justified. Mr. Salter, if consistent, must deny the right of members of the organism to commit suicide (what sort of organism is that, pray, whose members *can* commit suicide without consulting the social sensorium, or even in defiance of it?), and condemn the repeal of the law which compels people to live without hope or interest or happiness.

A Kansas judge has advised the people of a certain county to quit paying taxes. It seems that the citizens have issued an appeal in which they declare that, if they are compelled to pay the bonded indebtedness of the county, they will have to abandon their lands and town lots. The judge responded as follows: "The way to get rid of these bonds is to quit paying taxes. If we pay taxes and the money goes into the county treasury, we have to pay the bonds. The thing to do is for all hands to stop paying taxes. We have got to be patriotic. Everyone connected with county governments must work for nothing. Sheriffs, judges, county clerks, and all other salaried officers must get along without their salaries. If the sale of land is not ordered and advertised, it cannot be made, and the deeds and titles of the land would remain as they are. Then, when the debt against the county is outlawed, we can commence paying taxes again." This judge is advocating passive resistance to the State. He is an Anarchist as far as he goes, and it is absurd for him to talk about "patriotism." Of course, if he had self-respect, he would resign his office. An Anarchist and law-breaker cannot be a judge, whether he draw a salary or not. However, this Kansas judge is a great improvement on the Nebraska barbarian who urged people to commit crimes in order to vindicate their "honor."

The "Evening Post" has suddenly become an intense admirer of Herbert Spencer. Some weeks ago it published certain letters of his, written before his visit to the United States, in the interest of international arbitration, and it took occasion to parade its great admiration for the work and personality of the philosopher More recently, it announced, with great satisfaction, that Spencer had completed the last of the volumes containing his system. Every intelligent admirer of Spencer knows that for years the "Post" had derided him and ridiculed his claims to philosophic eminence. It had described him as "the apostle of tedium," and professed to find nothing in his works except dogmatism, pedantry, and commonplace ethics. For his political doctrines it never had any respect, and has none now. Why, then, this strange and sudden discovery of Spencer's genius and influence? Is the "Post" so anxious to avert war with England over Venezuela that it is willing to acknowledge as its master and guide the man to whom it never referred without a sneer?

Comrade Francis D. Tandy's book on "Voluntary Socialism" is now ready. In view of the extended synopsis of its contents which was printed in a recent number of Liberty, I scarcely need speak of the scope of the work. I have not been able yet to give it a careful reading, but an examination of certain parts of it leads me to believe that it will have a great influence in the popularization of Anarchism, which is the author's purpose. As Mr. Tandy has done me the great honor of dedicating his volume to me, it would be hardly in good taste for me to review it, but I shall ask some comrade to write a review of it for Liberty at an early date. It is a volume of over two hundred pages, tasteful in appearance and convenient in form, and sells, in cloth binding, at one dollar; in paper covers, at fifty cents. A list of works which may be read with advantage by students of the subjects treated is placed at the end of the book, and adds greatly to its usefulness. Orders may be sent to this office.

We have heard a great deal of late years about Socialism-of-the-Chair. Present indications point to the advent of a school of Anarchism-of-the-Chair. At any rate Professor Franklin H. Giddings, who conducts the department of sociology at Columbia College, distinctly declared, in a recent address before the Sunrise Club in this city, that to the question between the Anarchists and the Socialists as to whether the outcome of progress would be an absorption of human activities in government or a separation of human activities from government "the answer of historical sociology is all against the Socialist." And further he made the interesting, and to me new, criticism upon Spencer that the order of progress, instead of having been, as Spencer holds, from militancy through industrialism to liberty, has been from militancy through liberty to industrialism. It is Professor Giddings's view that the liberty which the advancing nations acquired from a more perfect security against the inroads of barbarians was the factor which made it possible for industrialism to arise. If this position can be sustained by facts, it will be a beautiful proof of the Anarchistic doctrine that liberty is the mother of order. It will also be instructive to Mr. Bolton Hall.

Liberty.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — Proudhon.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

The Municipal-Theatre Absurdity.

One of the things which do not in themselves deserve any serious consideration, and about which it is difficult to write with any degree of patience, is the proposal for State theatres. Yet circumstances render it necessary to overcome one's profound repugnance, and reason about this absurdity. When William Dean Howells offers the alderman-controlled theatre as a cure for the moral and artistic defects of the modern theatre, it is easy to dismiss the suggestion with an indulgent remark or two. Mr. Howells is an amiable and sentimental dreamer, who talks vaguely and inconsequentially about equality, liberty, and brotherhood without having the faintest scientific conception about any of these things. He always means well, and seldom knows better. When *he* favors a municipal theatre, the explanation is found in intellectual feebleness. When, however, a man of real intellectual power, G. Bernard Shaw, advocates the same scheme, and advocates it in his peculiar, positive, dogmatic, breezy, and extravagant manner, benevolence is out of place. Mr. Shaw is a fighter, and, when he is wrong, he is recklessly wrong. He makes the most amazing assumptions with the air of a man who states incontrovertible mathematical truths, and fairly takes one's breath away by his audacious defiance of facts.

Thus, some weeks since, in an article on the new factory act, Mr. Shaw rattled away in this characteristic style about the great and wonderful blessings of factory legislation:

> The effect of factory legislation is perfectly clear. It raises the standard of civilization among the protected workers; and it raises the standard of capacity needed for success in the competitive struggle between the employers. That is why able employers like it, and dull ones dread it and raise the cry of ruin to their industry. In the absence of effective factory legislation any greedy rascal with a turn for business can crowd an ordinary dwelling-house with starving wretches, knowing that such sanitary accommodation as there is will break down in a week. He can let it break down; he can slave-drive his employees to the limits of human endurance and beyond it; he need not clean the place nor ventilate it; he can let matters come to typhus-fever point, and then send out his infected goods to be worn or consumed by innocent people who order them through a respectable tradesman and know nothing of such horrors. This is the old theoretic "liberty of the individual," "freedom of contract," and so forth, still trotted out, whenever a factory bill is in hand, by the belated Whig, the old-fashioned editor whose strong point is a grasp of imaginary foreign politics, the academic prig-politician, and the ladies of the Women's Employment Defence League, all of them officiously ready catspaws for the bottom layer of sweaters whose narrow margin of profit is sure to be knocked off by the least additional instalment of decency, humanity, and public safety. Every time we insist on another coat of limewash, another cubic foot of space per head, another drain-pipe, another half hour off the working day, we submerge a batch of anxious, narrow, barely competent "manufacturers," and throw their business into the hands of men of superior ability and education. That this process of the elimination of the unfittest is a beneficial and inevitable one need not be treated as an open question. The advocate of factory legislation does not now engage its opponents in dialectical fencing matches on abstract principles; he simply bludgeons them with the unanswerable results of a century of experience. The practical problem that now confronts every successive government is how far it can venture at any given moment to raise the legal standard of treatment for our factory population without demanding too much from our "captains of industry." The reasonable line of opposition to any factory bill is, therefore, not to attack factory legislation on principle, or to talk obsolete nonsense about freedom of contract, but to argue that the standard of comfort for employees and of ability for employers has already been raised as high as the produce of the industry in question, or the supply of organizing ability in the ranks of the governing classes, will permit.

This is all very magnificent, but it is not argument. Mr. Shaw may say that the opponents of factory legislation are past argument, and, if he really thinks so, he is perfectly right in treating them as he does. But there are many who will pronounce Mr. Shaw a hopeless crank, an extravagant fanatic, a blatant demagogue, and an absurd ranter. Will this be pleasing to him? Mr. Shaw knows that there are other than belated Whigs and prig-politicians who are opposed to factory laws. He knows that there is no such thing as "unanswerable results of a century of experience" to bludgeon opponents with. There is a century of experience, and there are results, but whether the results have anything to do with the alleged cause is a question upon which opinions widely and vigorously differ. The standard of living among workmen has undoubtedly been raised, but there have been other things than factory legislation in existence and operation. Time was when Mr. Shaw endeavored to reason very clearly and scientifically with the believers in freedom of contract; if, to-day, he revels in sweeping statements and extravagant claims, he alone will be the loser and sufferer. "Liberty of the individual" and "freedom of contract" are far from having become "obsolete nonsense," whatever may be said by those who choose to live in a fools' paradise.

I have indulged in this long digression, not only because it is interesting and important in itself, but because it exemplifies the new method of Mr. Shaw's polemics. It is not only when dealing with such an old subject as factory legislation that he throws moderation and accuracy and philosophic fairness to the winds; even on so disputable and *fin-de-siècle* a question as State theatres Mr. Shaw is absurdly dogmatic and question-begging. The man who once distinctly declared that his tendencies and natural inclinations are all Anarchistic, and that he is a State-Socialist only because he can see no other alternative to monopoly and inequality and robbery, is now illogical and inconsistent enough to deplore "anarchical" protests against legal marriage and to advocate State theatres. True, he does not go the length of demanding the total suppression of private theatres; he is satisfied with less. But how can a man with Anarchistic leanings favor compulsory taxation for the maintenance of places of amusement? What has "rent," or natural inequality, to do with amusement?

Mr. Shaw is anxious to popularize and decentralize the theatre; he wishes to make the English a nation of playgoers. This, he thinks, cannot be accomplished under private management or commercialism. Here is some rich writing:

> The first thing to be cleared up is whether there is any reason for abandoning so important an institution as the theatre to private speculation. Private enterprise is immoral, irresponsible, full of the gambling spirit, always ready to sacrifice the public welfare to the magnitude of its dividends, honeycombed with corruption of all sorts, and insufferably boastful of the few virtues which the law has succeeded in forcing on it. A theatrical syndicate often represents private enterprise in its meanest depths. If it had to choose between making ten per cent. out of Shakspere and Goldsmith, and thirty per cent. out of an entertainment calculated to double the police and hospitals rates in a town, it would go for the thirty per cent. without hesitation. Public enterprise has been conducted in the past mostly by men hardened by a lifetime spent in private enterprise, and has consequently caught some of its vices; but public enterprise is responsible to public opinion, is practically unable to use the law of libel to muzzle the press, has no secret-service money to bribe with, and cannot entrench itself against the votes of the respectable public behind the votes of its own shareholders.
>
> On the whole, except in cases where theatrical private enterprise is the artistic enterprise of some individual actor or artistic *entrepreneur* of high character, it presents that frightful social phenomenon, a great social force for good or evil—one which, like alcohol, is most lucrative at its cheapest and worst—abandoned to exploitation by purely commercial speculators. Nowadays there is no more necessity or excuse for this than for the backward condition of those parishes which have no public libraries and baths, or those towns which have no museums or picture galleries. In our town halls all sorts of entertainments, from oratorios and dramatic performances to the drearier chin music and farce of politics, are given almost nightly, the dramatic performances being managed by means of the makeshift called a fit-up. Now, if a vestry or municipal corporation keeps a concert-room, I do not see why it should not keep a theatre.

There is a good deal more of the same sort of argumentation, but I will add only the concluding paragraph:

> At all events, one thing is certain. Dramatic art is not going to die of commercialism in England. If it comes to that, commercialism is much more likely to die of dramatic art. In department after department of life, private enterprise has begged to be protected from the competition of public enterprise for the sake of its own *beaux yeux*, and in no one of these cases has it been spared when it was obviously making a hopeless mess of a business vitally important to the welfare of the community. If the speculators will not give us decent theatres, where our children can be educated on rather more than a farthing's worth of Shakspere to an intolerable deal of "Morocco Bound" and stale "Frou-Frou," why, we shall sooner or later provide them for ourselves. I have no objection in the world. Has any one, except the speculators themselves?

Now, really, isn't it absurd of a man of Mr.

Shaw's outlook and experience (to say nothing of his "Anarchistic proclivities") to pretend that only the speculators object to theatres supported by compulsory taxation? Any one who appreciates and loves liberty must be opposed to the absurd scheme. It means that Mr. Shaw and his Philistine majority will tax everybody in order to provide amusements for this same Philistine majority. Whether the minority wants the amusements provided by this majority, or any amusements at all, is not deemed material. If Mr. Shaw and his majority want to be amused in a certain way, everybody is to be compelled to contribute. Is it "obsolete nonsense" to ask Mr. Shaw and his majority to pay for their own pleasures? Is it a mark of idiocy to refuse to support artistic paupers?

Is there any reason, asks Mr. Shaw, for abandoning so important an institution as the theatre to private speculation? Translated into intelligible and direct English, it means: is there any reason for letting people choose their own amusements and support such theatres as please them? Mr. Shaw's question is simply childish. What he really means is that, since, as a Fabian Socialist, he intends to abolish *all* private enterprise, and put the State in control of *every* important industry, institution, and interest, he naturally looks forward to the nationalization of the stage as part of the great scheme. He sees no reason for making an exception of the theatre, and he is right. Nobody does. But it clearly would have been more straightforward for him to say to the readers of the "Saturday Review" that he favors municipal theatres because he is a State Socialist and would municipalize or nationalize everything.

What Mr. Shaw finds it possible to say, with a perfectly straight face, about the inferiority of private enterprise (he prefers the term speculation) to public enterprise cannot be taken seriously. A professional humorist like Gilbert could not have put it more strongly. Bad as private enterprise is, it is integrity itself compared to public enterprise. The main thing that makes for efficiency and honesty is competition, the fear of being outdone, and the necessity of attracting and holding public favor against a number of active rivals. All such motives and incentives disappear when public enterprise annexes a given institution, and nothing else emerges to take their place. Some innocent reformers talk about honor and duty as motives, but the man of the world knows better. When the daily life of nations abounds in illustrations of political stupidity, corruption, ignorance, jingoism, and idiocy, it is rather cool for Mr. Shaw to wave these facts aside.

How supremely silly it is for Mr. Shaw to talk about public enterprise having caught some of the vices of private enterprise! The vices of private enterprise are simply the vices of human nature, and the question is whether private or public enterprise is more calculated to restrain the free play of these vices. In private enterprise there is the great anti-vice factor, competition, which compels men to be alert, industrious, ingenious, and more or less honest. There are, doubtless, evils under competition or liberty, but the cure for them is greater competition, greater liberty. Public enterprise is no cure, because it is wholly destitute of the curative element, competition. Public enterprise puts men to sleep. It makes them indolent, careless, indifferent, for they are independent and immune from rivalry. Non-use causes them to lose the little virtue that competition has developed in them. As for "public opinion," which Mr. Shaw professes to regard as a regulator and controller, we all know how much influence it exerts. Eternal vigilance has been declared to be the price of security from the corruption and negligence of public officials, and it is a price which cannot, in the nature of things, be paid. Public opinion can turn out one set of rascals and turn in another, but it cannot abolish rascality. When Mr. Shaw soberly speaks of the power of the "votes of the respectable public," the painful suspicion arises that he is losing his sense of humor. He writes like a good, dull Philistine, like one of the respectable voters.

Again, how nonsensical it is for Mr. Shaw to talk about private enterprise begging to be protected from the competition of public enterprise! Nothing of the sort has ever occurred. Private enterprise has protested against monopoly which fraudulently parades as competition. Public enterprise rests on compulsory taxation, and never competes on an equal footing with private enterprise, in a fair and free field. Against such "voluntary Socialism through the State" as Mr. Bliss's, which would really be competitive, no one has ever begged to be protected.

But enough about the political aspects of the matter, and a word or two about the artistic. That such an acute critic and discriminating judge of the drama should propose municipal theatres as a remedy for dramatic decadence is truly astonishing. The theatre, he complains, is dying of commercialism. This clearly means that the "speculators" do not find true art very profitable. They naturally give the public what it appears to want,—farce and melodrama. To blame them is absurd. They are no better and no worse than dramatic critics, editors, writers, saloon-keepers, and preachers. No one will supply things for which there is no demand,—no one except reformers and pioneers. Business is not reform. If the artistic dramas which the elect prefer had a market value, managers would tumble over each other in their eagerness to produce them. Occasionally managers mistake the public temper, and allow their own preconceived prejudices to decide a question, but such errors are speedily discovered and corrected. Competition attends to that. As a general thing, the "speculators" may be trusted to do exactly what the public taste renders it profitable to do. Mr. Shaw's quarrel, then, is with the public taste. He thinks, and rightly, that the public ought to enjoy true art and turn away in disgust from clap-trap and sham and vulgarity. His proposal, therefore, really is that municipalities shall *educate* the public in matters dramatic,—give them the finest plays, regardless of their artistic development, as a means of elevating them. But is there any reason to believe that municipal officials, elected by the respectable voters, will agree with Mr. Shaw and the elect as to what plays are fine, artistic, and elevating? Are not all the facts rather against such a belief? Would municipalities produce Ibsen or Jones (at his best) or Sudermann? Would not the rule of the absurd censure be even more arbitrary, "moral," and irritating than now? In truth, the notion that municipal theatres would promote the interest of art and realism and dramatic progress is worthy of one of Gilbert's heroes.

The theatre is not the only thing that is suffering (it is certainly not dying) from commercialism. Journalism, book-publishing, art other than dramatic, and even religion are also suffering from commercialism. Mr. Shaw ought to advocate municipal religion, municipal newspapers and magazines, and municipal books on philosophy, economics, and politics. The public taste needs to be educated in all of these directions. No "obsolete nonsense" will deter Mr. Shaw from urging the application of the proper remedy. But, before Mr. Shaw, with his respectable, solid voters to support him, enters upon the great work, I hope he will find time to re-read Ibsen's "Enemy of the People." Though it must all appear "obsolete nonsense" to Mr. Shaw, he may profit by it. Alas! Nordau's brilliant critic seems to be rapidly becoming a true degenerate. V. Y.

An Important Question of Method.

In the last number of Liberty Comrade Labadie endeavored to clear up the ambiguity which, in a previous article of his, had misled Dr. Maryson into hailing him as a representative of those reformers who want liberty because they want liberty and scorn to want it for any other reason. It seems to me, however, that the ambiguity still remains. The second article, like the first, states very clearly what Anarchy is, but that is not the question. That Anarchy is simply a condition of equal liberty we all agree. The difference between Dr. Maryson and myself arises over the question of how to get Anarchy. And he claims that Comrade Labadie on this point is with him and against me. I refuse to believe it. If Dr. Maryson is right in his interpretation of Mr. Labadie, then I, who have known and read him for years, have steadily misunderstood him.

Dr. Maryson claims that the way to get liberty is to refrain from giving any reasons, or any but the vaguest, for wanting liberty. He thinks that those who want liberty for reasons that are totally opposite and contradictory should unite to obtain it, and that in this union and in the prosecution of its work no one should undertake to point out what the results of liberty will be. I hold, on the other hand, that on our ability to show, not to the smallest detail, but clearly and indubitably as to trend, what the results of liberty will be, depends our power to obtain liberty. We shall never obtain liberty unless we can convince at least a considerable minority that liberty is a desirable thing, and no such minority will ever believe liberty to be desirable unless it is shown to them in what way it will benefit them. Now, what I want to know from Comrade Labadie—or, rather, what I want Dr. Maryson and the public to know from him, for I consider that I already know his opinion—is which of these two clearly opposite and irreconcilable positions is, in his view, the sound one. In his last article he has not told us this. He has told us in his admirable way what liberty is; he has told

us that, liberty having worked well in some things, we may profitably try it in all things; and he has told us that he believes personally that certain things will happen under liberty, just as others believe personally that totally different things will happen under liberty. So far, so good. Now let him tell us one thing more, the thing that he was asked to tell. Let him say whether, in struggling to get liberty, we should sink our differences as to the results of liberty and simply shout "Give us liberty!" or whether it is of high importance that those of us who think that liberty will work in a certain way should try to show that we are right, and that those who think that it would work in the opposite way are wrong. To take a specific case, does he think it a matter of no consequence, as a method of propagandism, to convince the people that under liberty they will enjoy the benefits of an admirably-perfected tool of exchange free of the burden of interest, and that those who claim that under liberty this tool of exchange will disappear or will bear interest do not understand the operation of free competition? T.

Basil Dahl's Admirers and Critics.

In another column J. Wm. Lloyd swells the chorus of appreciation of Basil Dahl, in addition to which I may quote the following passage from a letter lately received from the author of "The Gothic Minster," with which many readers of Liberty are undoubtedly familiar as one of the finest poems of recent times.

I certainly agree with you in regard to Basil Dahl. I was impressed by his "Toilers" before I read your notice of him. Metrically the poem is very simple. The cadence of every line is complete in itself, and does not run over into another line, as in higher blank verse. But the poem is really classic in its clearness and reserved strength. Latterly, I fear, I have grown to contemplate almost with pain a genius equipped like Miriam Daniel or Basil Dahl. They seem so horribly out of place in this rough-shod world. Yet what they give us is beyond price. It is not of much use to try to steer such geniuses. I hope Dahl will be able to reconcile his principles with the necessities of life, and will live long enough, not only to inspire us, but also to guide and instruct.

Affirmation of my judgment concerning Dahl from such a source as this, and from other judges of the competence of Mr. Gordak, Mr. Lloyd, and Mr. Robinson, is very reassuring to me; for, strongly as I may feel or think regarding any point of art, I know that I am not a qualified art critic, and so I feel the need of sustaining voices.

At the same time I am equally aware that art criteria are perhaps the most unreliable of all, and that experience teaches us to expect more divergence in art criticism, even among those regarded as competent, than in almost any other field of thought. So I am not disappointed when two or three say me nay. A few adverse criticisms have been passed upon Dahl, but none have seemed to me worthy of the least attention, save that of Mr. W. T. Small, whose letter appears in this issue. Mr. Small writes in a candid, but appreciative, spirit, and gives tangible reasons for his attitude. Therefore his argument deserves a word of comment. I cannot accept his statement of the necessary conditions of poetic greatness. It will not do to draw up a list of poetic qualities, and then deny greatness to a poet who is partly or wholly lacking in one of them, no matter in how high a degree he may be possessed of the others. On the contrary, extraordinary genius is almost always characterized by precisely such a lack of balance. We measure greatness more by its excesses than by its deficiencies. Therefore, if it be true that Basil Dahl is weak in the suggestive faculty, but exceptionally strong in constructive imagination, it by no means follows that he is inferior as a poet to another possessing both qualities in an equal degree. If we make 100 the standard of perfection and allow to Dahl 90 in constructive imagination and only 30 in suggestive faculty, he is probably a far greater poet than another whom we must rate at 60 in each of these qualities. Of course, greatest of all is the poet whom we rate at 90 or 100 in all poetic qualities. But no one has claimed that Dahl is the greatest of all.

Again, it must be remembered that all suggestion implies one who suggests an idea and another to whom the idea is suggested; and the effectiveness and reality of the suggestion are as dependent upon the latter as upon the former. And I have no intention of being disagreeably personal when I remind Mr. Small that "To the Toilers" may suggest much less to him than to Mr. Gordak, just as another poem may suggest less to Mr. Gordak than to Mr. Small.

Furthermore, it seems to me that we are prone to greatly over-estimate the suggestive faculty. Undoubtedly it is stimulating to the reader; but I have never been able to agree that the writer who can only suggest or hint at a thing has as clear a vision as the writer who clearly sees the same thing and can perfectly picture it.

And be it noted, finally, that in all that I have said above I have never admitted the truth of Mr. Small's statement that Basil Dahl is lacking in the suggestive faculty. T.

The newspapers have been again discussing Tolstoi's views on patriotism. Some explicitly declare that they are unsound and unnatural, notwithstanding the fact that they are in absolute harmony with that Christian philosophy of life which these critics profess to accept. Others, however, try to convict Tolstoi of a misconception, and pretend that what he denounces is not patriotism at all, but jingoism and swagger. Thus the Springfield "Republican" says that rational and genuine patriotism consists in honest pride in national institutions and achievements, coupled with a willingness to promote national prosperity by personal exertion. As a matter of fact, this is not patriotism at all, and has never been recognized as such. Tolstoi has no objection to any proper pride in national achievements. He objects to the sentiment "my country, right or wrong," which is the test of patriotism. Nothing is gained by disregarding history, fact, and universal feeling, and by claiming a name or designation which stands for a certain thing for another thing totally different. He who does not believe in the world's "patriotism" must be content to hear himself classed with the unpatriotic.

Mr. Salter has his inning in this issue of Liberty. I hope to be able to print Mr. Yarros's rejoinder in the next.

Welcome to the Poet, Basil Dahl!

Dear Tucker:

I have just returned from Palm Beach, Fla., where I have been for some weeks with a patient. To avoid luggage, no papers followed me, and, therefore, I have just seen your request (in which you flatteringly include me) to libertarian poets, "who know more about poetry" than yourself, to welcome the rising of the new star.

Poets have no more agreement than the unversed as to what constitutes poetry; so whether I know more about poetry than you is doubtful. But we shall not disagree here. Basil Dahl *is* a poet, and "To the Toilers" is "a really majestic utterance." I doff my hat, and give him my hand.

It would appear that he is a thought-poet, and they are the greatest of the sons of song.

If I might venture on a word of unasked advice, I would warn him at the outset against the melancholy and pessimism which are the peculiar vices and perils of the poet, and tell him not to be too quick (there appears little danger) to take your well-meant, practical advice to sell a part of his pearls for bread. I do not say you are wrong, but I often wonder whether I have not, myself, lost fatally by following such prudent counsel. Does the muse ever forgive when we say: Call again, I am busy now? Do the golden moments of inspiration ever come twice?

If you can succeed, Basil Dahl, and live only for the Dream, you have the breathless interest and sympathy of us all. J. Wm. Lloyd.

A Dissenting Voice.

To the Editor of Liberty:

After careful readings of "To the Toilers," I feel impelled to offer a word of comment. (I crave no publicity in your columns, especially as I have no desire to say a discouraging word to a young poet who believes so implicitly in himself.) The poem is remarkable as the work of a man who is speaking in a tongue not native to him. The quickness of his apprehension and experience of our language and the deep realities of a phase of our national metropolitan life betoken in the man something of that universal sympathy with the deep heart of humanity which is the mark and unmistakable make of the poetic soul. The writer of that poem certainly has a glimmering of the "divine spark" in his bosom. But, as a poetic craftsman,—a maker of poetry,—both in its formal structure and ideal substance, he seems to me not eminently successful. A great poet always does two things; he lifts the *commonplace* out of the *commonplace*, endows it with new significance, endows it with new beauty; and he *suggests* infinitely more than he says,—kindles a fire, as it were, which the reader's individuality feeds.

The first of these things the author of "To the Toilers" does. He displays not a little constructive imagination. He is sensitive and noble in conception. He invests his subject with a new light.

But the second thing, it seems to me, he does not do. He says neither more or less than his words convey. He delivers a rhythmical homily on æsthetic sanitation. He is didactic, pedagogic, and dogmatic (forgive the word), but is not suggestive of a thousand and one unexpressed and inexpressible ideas and emotions, without which suggestiveness no poet is great.

This is not to deny that the poet has power and worth. It is simply the expression of *doubt* as to the exalted merit you find in him. I do not think he is a great poet.

It is not my purpose to belittle the man's work,—to detract by a carping and bigoted criticism. The memory of the murdered Keats is too deeply grounded, I mean only to question the exaggerated, as it seems to me, estimate that has found expression in your paper. Respectfully yours,

W. S. Small.

Tufts College, Mass.

Lincoln on the Politician.

[Boston Globe.]

A hitherto unpublished speech of Abraham Lincoln's is brought to light in one of the current magazines. It was delivered in 1837. Why his biographers have omitted to refer to it is not clear. In this

speech Lincoln felt called upon to take his measure of average politicians, and this is his definition of them :

A set of men who have interests aside from the interests of the people, and who, to say the most of them, are, taken as a mass, at least one long step removed from honest men. I say this with the greater freedom because, being a politician myself, none can regard it as personal.

Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps.

The Secretary wants every reader of Liberty to send in his name for enrolment. Those who do so thereby pledge themselves to write, when possible, a letter every fortnight, on Anarchism or kindred subjects, to the "target" assigned in Liberty for that fortnight, and to notify the secretary promptly in case of any failure to write to a target (which it is hoped will not often occur), or in case of temporary or permanent withdrawal from the work of the Corps. All, whether members or not, are asked to lose no opportunity of informing the secretary of suitable targets. Address, STEPHEN T. BYINGTON, Flushing Institute, Flushing, N. Y.

The Minneapolis "Times" has published three, at least, of our letters; the Rockland "Independent," too, has been generous to us as usual.

Comrade J. T. Small, of Provincetown, Mass., has been responsible for keeping up a lively succession of Anarchist letters in the local paper, the "Advocate," for several months past. Comrade Labadie and I have written most of the letters, but Comrade Small, besides writing a good many himself, has been the hidden power to keep the whole at work. The tax-collector of Provincetown furnishes our opposition. The letters in question are generally at least a column of a large-sized sheet, and have lately averaged more than one a week, including our opponent's. The question of Anarchism is being treated in the broadest way. Labadie's and Small's letters are good, and Labadie writes me, with underlines, that my last was "a corker." Small has just made arrangements for reprinting the whole of Gen. M. M. Trumbull's "Arena" article, showing the outrageousness of the condemnation of the "Chicago Anarchists," with half of Judge Gary's "Century" article in defence of his judgment, to which Trumbull's was a reply.

My reason for giving this account of the work in the "Advocate's" columns is a letter from Small, saying: "It would help us a little now if we could only bring the paper a few regular subscribers. If any friend would send me a dollar, the paper would be sent for a year." A word to the wise is sufficient,—at least, we thought so till Mr. Tucker lately told us it wasn't. If you want to get a lot of good reading, and at the same time exert an influence to maintain a policy that keeps a prominent country paper full of Anarchistic matter, send on your dollar. The tactical value will probably be greater if subscriptions are sent through Small than if sent directly to the publisher. Hurry up your subscription, so as to get the whole of the reprints; if you have read Trumbull's article already, it will be a good tract to hand to the heathen. So will our letters, after you are through with them.

A target of a year ago, the "Altruist," seems just to have learned the addresses of some Corps members, and sends samples for July, 1895, to me and others. In these I find a letter from one of our members as follows:

I see you are one of the targets of Section B of the Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps, in last issue of Liberty. You are certainly mistaken about Anarchists and Anarchism. It offers the only solution of the problems of our time, which solution is only to be found through more freedom. Communism is losing ground in every direction, and, with the advance of education, will eventually take its place with all the other illusions and chimeras of the past. I dare say you are now too old to learn that, and you will probably shuffle off the mortal coil believing that Communism, instead of liberty, will save the world.

I have several faults to find with this letter. In the first place, I think it always bad policy to let a target know that you are writing to him as a member of an organization for that purpose; and so, as far as I know, do all others who are concerned with the leadership of such organizations. In the next place, the body of the letter consists of assertions without arguments, and assertions of this kind are useless without arguments. (*Explanations* without arguments may be very valuable.) In the third place, the conclusion has an unnecessary tendency to excite antagonism. The writer apparently thought the "Altruist" editor such a fossil that argument would be wasted on him, and that unpleasant remarks could make him no worse; but the blunder is evident. The editor simply printed the letter, added a few notes striking at its weak points, and had us at a decided disadvantage before his readers.

I still believe in my fundamental principle of propaganda,—never to antagonize anybody in any way unless my propaganda purpose requires it. Disrespectful words about the person you address are surely useless; even if they do not harm, they waste your time and strength in writing them, and help keep you in the bad habit of writing longer letters than is necessary. So, too, if you disagree with a man about religion, it may be very important to show him his error; but, if you try to do this in the same letter where you are talking Anarchism, the unacceptableness of your ideas on religion will prejudice him still more against Anarchism, and the unacceptableness of your Anarchism will prejudice him still more against your ideas on religion. Thus, by opposing his previous ideas on two distinct points at once, you weaken the force of your attack on both. One thing at a time is the best rule.

Why I believe in the Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps:

Third reason—because letter-writing to newspapers reaches a larger audience than any other means. Our own papers are of small circulation; private conversation reaches only a small circle; even public speaking rarely reaches a thousand, unless reported in the papers. There are some things, to be sure, that require a more thorough treatment than can be given in occasional newspaper letters; but there are others for which we cannot afford to neglect our best opportunity of the widest publicity. And then the best thing we can do to make our newspaper letters less fragmentary in their effect is to send several at a time to the same paper.

Meanwhile personal and hand-to-hand agitation has its peculiar value too, and the Letter-Writing Corps affords the only way by which a man of prominence can be simultaneously attacked by half a dozen lively Anarchists.

Moral: Join the Corps.

Target, section A.—Robert Ellis Thompson, president of Central High School, Philadelphia, Pa. He says in the preface to his "Political Economy": "I have tried to walk on the straight line of justice, and to deal with entire fairness in discussing opinions which I do not share." In his last chapter he deals with Communism, Socialism, and Anarchism. The first two of these he treats at some length. He closes his book, however, with the following:

The *Anarchist* does not much concern us here, as his programme is simply the abolition of government, except as it may be judged expedient from time to time to extemporize some sort of lynch-law to abate social nuisances. He would come swiftly to a kind of communism, by abolishing all public guarantee of the rights of property, and thus throwing everything open to the strongest hand that could seize it. The Socialist would take us back to barbarism; but the Anarchist improves on the proposal by suggesting a return to savagery.

Correct the misapprehension of Anarchism, and show him that there is more in it than so short a paragraph will dispose of.

Section B.—Rev. Geo. C. Lorimer, D. D., Boston, Mass., preached April 19 on "Liberty in America." Two of his paragraphs, as reported in the Boston "Globe," are:

Liberty is like nitrogen. When nitrogen is combined with certain gases, it becomes health-giving; with others, it is poisonous. So, too, the effects of liberty, whether beneficial or baneful, depend on the combination. Liberty is certainly not a blessing, when it is a part of licentiousness or Anarchism. . . .

I believe in liberty for Cuba, for Brazil, and all the southern provinces. Even if these people, on account of education, could not use liberty to the best purpose at first, or could not make a dignified government, it is none the less a reason why they should not have a chance. Out of chaos would spring cosmos, for, next to religion, liberty is the saviour of society.

Show him that Anarchism is nothing but liberty, and that the most perfect liberty is practicable and desirable for America to-day.

STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

Life.

To him whose mind is narrow and eclipsed
With ignorance or prejudices old,
To whom time's money, and the world a mart;
To him who, either cloyed with luxury
Or starved with indigence and slavery,
Drags on his days in dull indifference,
And, rich or poor, longs for another world,—
To him existence may be but a dream,
Or one long struggle in a sea of cares.
To me it is a grand reality,
Of mysteries innumerable full.

This riddle life, this deep, exhaustless spring,
This undecaying universal soul
That fills the air and peoples all the earth
With shapes innumerous and wonderful
This grand eternity,—though brief to us,—
How fain I am to feel it in my veins,
To be a conscious part of all I see!
And though through poverty I cannot taste
The cup of pleasure I have long desired,
Yet can I make no senseless moan at life,
For, if not evil *made*, then life is good;
And I have found a life of high delights,
Delights I would not change for heaps of gold.

What is this life? It is a life of thought,
A life of love, and hate, and sympathy:
Hate for the mean, love for the wise and true,
And sympathy for all who toil and pine.
And thus I share the joys and woes of all,
And, though it is not sweet to feel with woe,
E'en this I'd not exchange for others' joy.

I feel with things that seem to have no life,
But which exist, and bloom, and fade, as we;
I feel with beings not of my own kind,
But who are parts of this unbounded whole.
A rill, a rush, a grove, a hill, a star,
The simplest thing impels me to reflect;
And mute before the universe I stand,
Not knowing well what first to contemplate,
And glad to be alive—a looker-on.

This being Man—how wonderful a thing!
This piece of clay that moves and speaks and thinks,
That models and creates such works of art,
That fills the air with wondrous melodies,
And sits in judgment over all things else,
This mirror that reflects the universe—
Shall I not learn to love it and admire?
And, although now corrupt with countless sins,
With meanness, hatred, avarice, and pride,
With cowardice and base hypocrisy,
Yet lives the man within—the man that feels,
That loves and pities, longs, aspires, and dreams,
The man that does, and will deserve his name;
For he is not accursed by some great god,
But by his might controls his destiny.

When fair young mothers hold their buxom babes,
And lift them in their arms toward the sun,
Kissing their limbs or fondling them with love,
I view them silently, and bless them both;
Or, standing near a village graveyard green,
Where life-contented children are at play
With laughter loud, and skips, and ringing shouts,
I oft contrast them with the crumbling tombs,
Seeing in them the deathlessness of life.
And oft on love awaking summer nights,
When youths and sprightly maidens sally forth
With agile step, and whispers soft and low,
And words of love, and mild, endearing looks,
I mingle with their throngs in sympathy,
And, though alone, rejoice in their delight;
Or in the calm of night I close my eyes,
And with my fancy conjure up the dead,
The generations of the olden time,
And, clothing them with life, I see them pass
With solemn grandeur and gigantic tread
Along the starry background of the past;
Or toward the future time I turn my glance,
And in the bright horizon of the morn
Behold mankind released from all its chains,
And dignified in aspect, mind, and state.
And from the fulness of my heart I sing:
How grand, how sweet, is this our earthly life!

Basil Dowd.

Mr. Yarros on "Anarchy or Government?"

In writing to the editor of Liberty that I should say what I *could* in defence of myself after Mr. Yarros's extended criticism of my little book, "Anarchy or Government?" was concluded, I meant what I said. I am not sure that I can answer all his criticisms satisfactorily to him or to the public or to myself. It was an inquiry which I undertook to make in my book (as was indicated in its sub-title),—not an argument,—and, as I care more for the truth than for the results I arrived at, I don't see why I should not willingly admit any lack of clearness, or thoroughness, or consistency, which Mr. Yarros may have been able to point out; and this without agreeing at once to make myself clear or consistent, for this, I have generally found, requires a little time and leisure, and I am woefully lacking in the latter at present.

Mr. Yarros says that I attempt "to refute the position of philosophical individualist Anarchism." In this he is mistaken. He speaks of my failing "to state correctly the side against which" I argue,—of my "misrepresenting the Anarchistic position" in a special instance. He thinks I have fitted myself for my task by "a careful study of the literature of philosophical Anarchism." In this latter remark he gives me too much credit. I have read a little in this literature; I have talked with some philosophical Anarchists; but it was not with Anarchists or with Anarchism (which word, I think, does not occur in my book) that I was concerned in the book, but with an idea. That idea was of a state of things without government. My inquiry was: Why should government be? Why should we not get along without government? Anarchy I simply took as a synonym for a state of things in which government did not exist,—as a convenient, and indeed necessary, antithesis to government, in the discussion I was conducting.

It goes without saying that government (as I defined it) would be a superfluity in an ideal state of society,—that is, that anarchy would characterize such a state. But my main question was whether anarchy would work under existing conditions,—conditions in which men, on occasion, do steal and rob and kill and commit various kinds of injustice, and in which, naturally and justifiably, resistance is offered to such aggressions. Mr. Yarros thinks that in one case I identify Anarchism with Tolstoism, or non-resistance; but this is owing to undue literalism in interpreting the passage he quotes. When I speak of force as disappearing under anarchy, I do not mean force exercised against invaders, any more than the force which the invaders themselves use; I mean social force,—the force exercised by society as such,—for this is what government in essence is. Individual force, whether in aggressing or resisting aggression, is a part of the conditions under which we live at present, but social force may or may not be exercised; in a considerable part of life it is not exercised at all at present. My problem was why it should be exercised anywhere? Why should not dependence be placed entirely on freedom and free association,—whether for resisting aggression or for any other purpose? I may say that I observe a little more acuteness than sympathy here and elsewhere in Mr. Yarros's statement of my positions. Still it may be that I should have expressed myself more clearly.

Mr. Yarros thinks that I should have dealt at greater length with the theoretical bases of the two systems of Anarchy and government, saying that the "important question is whether Anarchy is just and possible, and *a priori* considerations should precede the presentation of alleged facts tending to throw light upon it." Now, it may be that the whole book should have been at greater length to secure a really respectable treatment of so important a subject, but within the limits I set to myself I think I gave a fair amount of space to fundamental theoretical considerations. I showed that force—any kind of force—was *ipso facto* an evil; that the presumption was always in favor of arrangements that work without force; that anarchy was thus intrinsically desirable, as government was not. In other words, in answer to Mr. Yarros's specific question, I urged that anarchy was "possible" and, by implication, possibly "just." But as to how anarchy actually works and is likely to work,—this is another question, and cannot be settled by theoretical considerations. And it was this practical question that I was chiefly concerned with. For an answer to it I know of no other resort than to facts and experience. Moreover, it is a question that has to be separately considered in relation to each of the several departments of life. It may be, for example, that anarchy will work well in one department, and not in another. It is the common opinion, indeed, now that anarchy would not work well in protecting life and property, but does work well in the industrial realm, and that the less regulation there is there, and the more freedom, the better. This at least the classical English political economy holds—and most practical business men. I know, indeed, of no other way (after the theoretical ground has been cleared) than just "to discuss and balance the advantages and disadvantages of government and Anarchy in a variety of situations and relations," which Mr. Yarros speaks of as a method that "may properly be called in question."

Of course, under the head of theoretical considerations comes also the question whether government, though not abstractly desirable, is permissible. If wrong were involved in it, then it would be barred out as a resource in the nature of the case, and we should have to get along with anarchy as best we can, whatever may be its practical shortcomings. In other words, it is a fundamental theoretical question whether wrong is involved in the exercise of social force. Instead, however, of dealing with it *in abstractu* and once for all, I preferred to take it up in connection with concrete cases, as I considered them one after another in successive chapters.

First, I asked whether it could be considered wrong to exercise social compulsion in time of, and for the purposes of, defensive war. Mr. Yarros enlarges on my "pseudo-reasoning" on this head. Had I had any idea that it would be seriously called in question, I might have enlarged on it, or rather enlarged it, myself. I spoke of what "every one would feel," etc., and Mr. Yarros somewhat sternly says that to do so "is to abdicate the function of the philosopher and logical truth-seeker." But *cela dépend*. I suppose even Mr. Yarros would excuse me from the necessity of arguing that unprovoked murder was wrong. If we should always be giving reasons for our statements, we should be going back to the foundation of the universe all the time, and should not get much ahead. I find Mr. Yarros himself saying in another connection: "Such a contention implies that the minority are the slaves of the majority, and not independent and sovereign individuals," as if "independent, sovereign individuals" were a self-evident reality or necessity, and the mention of them sufficient to dispose of any argument that left them out of account. For myself, I doubt whether there either are or ought to be any "independent, sovereign individuals"; still, I will not reproach Mr. Yarros with abdicating the "function of philosopher and logical truth-seeker" for failing to argue about them. He simply reached a point in the descending series of arguments at which he thought he might rest. Now, in saying that I thought that an individual, who in a time of danger to his community or tribe should refuse to do anything for it and should urge against any proposed compulsion that this would be an interference with his sacred right to do as he pleased, would make a claim that "every one would feel" to be "strained and exaggerated," I reached a similar point. But it appears that I was mistaken in saying "every one," and that I must descend a little deeper in my argumentation.

Now, I admit that those with whom it is a matter of conscience not to kill, even in self-defence, should not be forced either to fight or to pay for the expenses of fighting, and this exception I made in my book. But, in writing what Mr. Yarros quotes, I had in mind (as the connection unmistakably shows) persons acting from the ordinary motives which lead men to be reluctant to help in time of danger,—namely, selfishness and cowardice. I asked if a wrong was done them in forcing them to fight or to support those who were fighting. Underlying this, of course, is the question what makes anything right or wrong. Now, as far as I am able to see, right is that which makes for welfare, and wrong is that which makes for harm or injury,—our own welfare or injury and that of those with whom we are associated. We have not a right to injure others (save in self-defence), and we have not a right to benefit ourselves at the expense of others. Mr. Yarros says that I "cannot deny the right" of certain persons to "commit suicide or to get themselves killed." Certainly I can (and do), when such things mean injury and ruin to the community or tribe to which the persons belong, and I should be glad to know on what Mr. Yarros founds the right. I am aware that men have devious ways and do many things, but I do not see why we should go beyond this and say that they have *a right* to act so and so, save as this is consistent with a standard or sanction that is at least as large as the good of the whole to which they belong. Conscience, as matter of fact, has been largely formed on this basis. As anthropologists and sociologists inform us, men have felt, however vaguely and dimly, their ties to the clan or tribe or community of which they were members, and right or wrong has generally been what they felt they might do, or might not do, consistently with the security and welfare of the larger aggregate. If men live absolutely isolated and alone (or to the degree they do), they do not seem to acquire a conscience. In other words, at least in its origin, conscience was a social sentiment, and so, if the indifferent and cowardly people whom we are now considering had any feelings of wrong in connection with being forced to coöperate with their more public spirited brethren, it would be rather that they were *doing* wrong in the first place than that they *suffered* wrong in having the compulsion put upon them. It is as with many another situation in life in which force may be put upon us to do what we very well know to be our duty, but to which we are disinclined. I suspect that the abstract, absolute right of the individual to do with himself as he pleases, irrespective of the welfare of others about him, has been reserved to the "philosophical Anarchists" of to-day to discover,—if, indeed, I am right in crediting them with such a notion, on the basis of the apparent contention of Mr. Yarros.

To sum up: Right and wrong are measured by the welfare of the tribe or community; to force individuals to defend the community is (unless the individuals have conscientious scruples against war) no wrong; and they themselves would feel it to be no wrong, however they might *dislike* the compulsion. And I would add one word about our suppositious "Quakers" or "philosophical (or should I say here Tolstoian?) Anarchists" in the tribe or community. If they continued in the community (after the prevention of its annihilation), I think they might properly be taxed more heavily for its support than the rest of the members. Of course, this would have reference only to primitive communities, which one might leave at pleasure (not to modern States which in effect cover the whole earth, and, if one leaves one of them, he *has* to go into the jurisdiction of another). But, if they continued in the community when they were free to leave it, it would evidently mean that they appreciated the advantages of life in it; and, since they had done nothing to prevent its annihilation, it would seem no more than fair that they should pay extra for the privilege of remaining there. If they did not feel it was worth that much to them, they could leave.

I am aware that a difficulty does seem to arise in having the *majority* act for the tribe,—*i. e.*, in deciding when danger exists and war is necessary. There is the same difficulty in having the majority act for the tribe or society in any of the relations I have considered in my book. Mr. Yarros enlarges on this difficulty at different times. Perhaps I had better now deal with it once for all,—that is, as far as I can deal with it. Undoubtedly it would be better if social action could be unanimous; for, though I do not consider liberty an absolute good, as some "philosophical Anarchists" seem to, I do consider it a good, and the only justification for ever disregarding it is in case some greater good is to be attained. But, practically speaking, unanimity is an ideal rarely attained. The question, then, is whether it is better that a society should act with something short of unanimity rather than not act at all. It is as with an individual in a difficult emergency,—when, for example, he must make some perilous leap or form any decision about which there are risks either way. One thought moves him in one way, and another thought moves him in another, and fear might prompt him not to act at all. But the situation may be such that he must act,—and act he does, though some of his thoughts or feelings are overborne. Thoughts or feelings are the units in

the individuals; individuals are the units in a society. Sometimes the only way in which an individual or a society *can* act is by majority rule,—or at least some controlling single thought or emotion that is equivalent to a majority. It is either this, or paralysis, non-action,—in both cases. The only question is, then, whether a society (tribe, community, family, or whatever be the social aggregate) may act—for it is irrelevant and superfluous, and, indeed, in a way absurd, to grant that a society may act, and then to deny it recourse to the only method by which action can be effected.

This question runs back into the more ultimate question whether such things as societies, properly speaking, exist (for, if they exist, it goes without saying that they may defend themselves and act for their welfare). Are there any such things, it may be asked; is there ever anything more than a lot of individuals living alongside of one another? This is a question of fact, and I did not argue it in my book, simply taking for granted that there were such phenomena as our social naturalists or sociologists describe to us,—that is, groups of people who in some way or other come to feel themselves one, just as a swarm of bees or a herd of buffaloes does, though perhaps with a more distinct consciousness. ("Society is a scientific abstraction," says Mr. Yarros. True; but societies are not.) It is on this basis that political formations are reared; it is by this presupposition that they can be rationally explained; but what is the basis of this basis, the *rationale* of this presupposition itself, I did not inquire, though I recognized that it was a problem calling for consideration and referred briefly to some of the literature of the subject (see pp. 50, 51, and footnote 2 on latter page). I simply strove to make clear what was involved in the very notion of a society, feeling that it was necessary to do so to make plain why a society might, and, on occasion, must, do certain things. And, strange as it may seem, I am obliged to say that my critic does not seem to have grasped this notion, at least as it lay in my mind and as I have tried to set it forth in the pages of my book. He does not appear to rise above the notion of "independent, sovereign individuals"; I see no indication that he has got clearly into his mind even the idea of a real society. It is as if one should have a very clear notion of hydrogen and oxygen, but should conceive of water as a mere mechanical juxtaposition of the two, which, I believe, chemistry declares it is not. Or as if one should have very clearly the notion of bricks, but not of a house; for it is not the bricks that make the house, but the bricks combined together under the guidance of an idea. If one does not perceive the idea of a house, the notion of bricks would never give it to him. So, if one does not perceive that in a society individuals are not individuals merely, but are *members* of something beyond themselves, just as the hydrogen in a drop of water is no longer hydrogen simply, but is one of the constituents of a new unity, he has not got the idea of a society. It may, of course, well be that there is nothing corresponding to the idea, just as there may be no houses and no water, but that does not excuse us from having a clear comprehension of what the idea is.

If Mr. Yarros had had the idea of societies as more than a lot of individuals situated alongside of one another, he would not only have been prevented from making this and that criticism that I might refer to; he would have rewritten the entire set of his articles. Whether there *are* any societies or not, there have been various groups of people at different times in the history of the world who have *conceived* themselves as societies,—*i. e.*, as somehow bound to one another, as forming in some sense a unity; and they have acted accordingly. They have lived and fought and perhaps died as groups. Mr. Yarros speaks of the "community," or, "logically speaking," the "majority." He is mistaken. If the community were, logically speaking, the "majority," it would not be the community at all, for no majority makes the community; on the numerical basis it is only all who make the community. But, truly and logically speaking, the majority-vote or any other controlling influence in the community is simply the means by which the community as such comes to act at all. If the community could not act in some such way, it would not act. A majority vote is simply a practical necessity,—that is all. Hence the language about the minority being "enslaved" and all that loses its relevance. Of course, one can imagine slavery in a society that could be reprobated on moral grounds, but the slavery that is simply involved in the fact that each one cannot always have his own way, but must sometimes yield to the way decided upon by others, does not seem to me worth "pothering" over, unless it is by those who erect self-will into a sort of god. On the whole, political society is thought to be of advantage to the race; but almost any advantage, such is the mixed-up state of the conditions under which we live, seems to have connected with it some minor disadvantage. I admit that for any one who does not agree to this it is rather hard to get out of political society in the present age of the world, but in long periods of human history it has been quite possible; and if one now really gets a conscience against government, as Quakers have against war. I for one would favor excusing such a person from contributing to its support, only hoping that he would give voluntarily to good causes in exchange for the services he receives at society's hands, and at the same time insist that government would not allow itself to be imposed upon.

In view of this general explanation, it does not seem worth while to take up one paragraph or sentence after another of Mr. Yarros's in detail. For example, he says: "The real question, however, is why certain individuals, merely because they happen to live in a certain arbitrarily-circumscribed place, give themselves the name of society, and straightway proceed to do certain things which they would not otherwise dream of doing as a matter of course." I answer that a society never was founded on so slender a basis as this of mechanical juxtaposition merely, or, if it was, never amounted to anything. There must be some bond of common interests, some internal bond of feelings and ideas. Blood and religion have been about the only forces that have formed real societies down at least to recent times. I said in my book that societies were "not made off-hand," and nothing is more superficial than the idea of a society suggested in the words just quoted from my critic. The society that is at the basis of the political formation known as the United States is a most imperfect affair, as is the society at the basis of that political formation known as the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or of that known as the municipality of Philadelphia, and the same might be said of most of our commonwealths and great cities. Is it not almost grotesque to speak of the people of Philadelphia or the people of New York city as a society? The fact is, an American society, and such local societies in the larger whole as we designate as cities, are still in the making—and it remains to be seen whether anything will be really made. We have the forms of political life in this country, but the substance of social thought and feeling is still to a large extent lacking. The forms rattle; the social body is not alive.

So I need say nothing in reply to such repeated questions as: "By what hocus-pocus do the majority become the sole mouth-piece of 'society,' and the minority their slaves?" He asks why I did not "trot out" the "society" argument in dealing with defensive war. I conceive that I did implicitly, as I have here done explicitly. It was a mere matter of convenience, the arranging my book as I did; and possibly I should have done better, if I had acted as Mr. Yarros suggests. Moreover, he says I did not stop to consider the Anarchistic position on this point; but I did (p. 42), and said that "a call for volunteers or for voluntary contributions might have better effect than any possible conscription or measure of taxation could have"; I had simply argued that a society would do no wrong in using force, but, as to what positively it should do, I said that this was a matter of expediency; anarchy might be the better expedient. Again, Mr. Yarros appears to think there is a certain arbitrariness in making "social action" and "government" practically synonymous. But by "social action" I mean the action of the society, and all action of the society, so long as there is not unanimous agreement to it, involves the essence of government. On the other hand, mere majority action is not social action; if it does not bind the minority, but only themselves, it is a purely anarchistic, not a governmental, or properly social, procedure. There is really no social action—*i. e.*, action of a society—that is not a governmental action, in the present state and imperfection of human evolution. "Only unanimous action can be properly described as 'social action,'" says Mr. Yarros; this is like saying that the individual can act (or have his action designated as such with propriety) only when all his thoughts are one way. But it is the decisive amid contradictory thoughts that determine the individual's action; so it is the decisive thoughts or individuals in a society that determine social action—the rest simply consenting, or, if they protest, protesting in vain.

Undoubtedly, since a society determines (or the influential members of it determine) its course of action, it is not infallibly right. Mr. Yarros thinks it is "hard lines" (this inelegant expression is mine, not his) that a society should be subject to the *thought* of the majority,—thought that may be no better than hysteria, folly, and jingoism. Alas! this is so. It is the common infirmity of the race that it has nothing better than thought to guide it, and is therefore prone to all sorts of mistakes and even follies. Truth and right, infallible "science," do not descend on us from heaven, or from any realm of pure philosophy that I am aware of, but have to be groped for. Yet, if a society is to act at all, what other guide is better than thought? Mr. Yarros would not probably suggest any, and would simply rid us of the dilemma by ridding us of the premise. That ground I will not thresh again, but I should say something by way of correcting the error into which Mr. Yarros falls by supposing that I hold that a society can do no wrong. In two ways a society can do wrong. In the first place, it must seek the welfare of all its members. This duty springs from the general rule of abstract ethics, and, moreover, it inheres in the very idea of a true society. A society that was infected with the class spirit, and sought to exalt one class on the basis of the servitude of another, would be a contradiction in terms; all arrangements in it must be consistent with and grow out of the social consciousness,—the demand for the common good. Anything else is simply the rule of one society over another. Secondly, a society may go wrong in estimating what really is for the social welfare. Experience may prove that it erred. Mr. Yarros is much exercised that I say that "no line of *principle* can be drawn as to how far a society may go, and where it must stop, in securing social welfare." It does not seem possible that he should have taken offence at a mere word. "Principle" often means moral principle; but here I evidently used it in a broader sense, as meaning any fixed dividing line. "Securing social welfare" I said was the aim, and I expressed my belief that society might go as far in compassing that end as it needed to go and could go with profit; that no abstract line was to be laid down, and society told that there it must stop. Suppose an individual were told that up to a certain point he might seek to improve himself, but beyond that point he was not free to; that here a "science of ethics" drew limits. Alas! for the science of ethics. It would be brushed to one side readily enough by one who cared more for things than for names. I think it well enough for ethics and for politics to be regarded, apart from a few fundamental principles, as progressive sciences (or arts), capable of learning and moving as the changing situations of mankind require. As John Stuart Mill said, "The ends of government are as comprehensive as those of the social union. They consist of all the good, and all the immunity from evil, which the existence of government can be made either directly or indirectly to bestow." It was with a thought of this sort that I wrote the sentence Mr. Yarros quotes, and it is by no means equivalent to saying that "government may do whatever it pleases." If I say that an individual may go as far as he can in compassing his perfection, is it fair to say that I hold he may do as he pleases? Societies, like other things in nature, are brought to a term by doing wrong and foolish things, and in the meantime their life is more or less troubled and their hold on life uncertain, as is the case with most of the great so-called "societies" of the earth to-day.

As to how far a society shall, in fact, go depends on circumstances. I have been concerned only to maintain its right to go as far as it needs to go and can go with success. But as to whether it does need to as a certain thing or, even if it does, as to whether it can, —this cannot be settled by abstract considerations. In connection with each one of the ends of government

I have considered in my book, I have admitted and entertained the idea that voluntary action and free association might achieve it better. It is a question of fact in every case. Mr. Yarros calls me a "governmentalist," but I am not so on any abstract considerations. I can *conceive* anarchy working as well as government now, and have said as much in the book. But "conceiving" does not settle facts. I think anarchy would work badly in protecting life and property, and I think it does work badly in the industrial realm. The former I judge from facts of the past, the latter from facts of the present. On the other hand, I think anarchy in religion the only practicable arrangement under present circumstances. Mr. Yarros says "there is nothing absurd in demanding that protection of life and liberty shall be left to voluntary social action"—surely there is; the only question is whether, when it is so left, all the members of a society get it. If they do, anarchy is vastly better and simpler than government; but the general experience has been that, when such protection has been left to voluntary action, only a few get it. Well, what matters it? some one might say. Of course, to such a questioner it would not matter. But, if one has the social concept; if one believes that all the members of a society have certain rights and claims as such; if, in other words, the "organism" theory, which Mr. Yarros sees fit to speak derisively of as "false and ridiculous," is at bottom true,—then it matters a good deal. And on this account I have dwelt much on what was involved in the meaning of a society in my book.

Mr. Yarros does indeed question—and other critics have done the same—whether we have a *régime* of anarchy in the industrial realm at the present time. He calls this a superficial assumption, and refers to the amount of legislation touching industrial affairs that now exists. The inference is that a fair test of Anarchism is not really afforded. Undoubtedly there is truth in this, and I ought to have made some qualifications in writing what I did. Yet I have this to say: anarchy is a question of more or less. There may be anarchy in one department of life, and not in another. Even in the same department there may be to a certain extent anarchy and to a certain extent government. The question is: how does anarchy work so far as it exists? Undoubtedly we have protective tariffs now, and so far we have government in industry rather than anarchy. On the other hand, we have free trade in *labor* (with insignificant exceptions), and so far we have anarchy rather than government. As regards the hours and wages of labor, and as regards its right to organize (without prejudice to itself), we have anarchy. There is no social protection and guarantee in any of these matters. There is no social protection against unemployment, or accident or starvation (though possibly poor-houses ought to be regarded as protection against the latter). In a considerable realm, affecting the life and interests of a large number of the members of society, there is to-day pretty thorough-going anarchy, and the great majority of the so-called "best" people in the community have a strong prejudice in favor of it. They think social protection of the laborer would unman him,—that society should absolutely keep its hands off when any struggle between the laborers and their employers arises. We have here a large fact and a strong prejudice that may be properly called anarchistic.

Yet, whether these things are as desirable as is commonly thought may be questioned. My own feeling and observation are that this non-interference on the part of society is not working good, but evil and deterioration, to the laborer. Of course, if the evils of anarchy here could be shown to be derivable from the evils of government elsewhere, then indeed a more thorough-going anarchy would be the cure. But I have never been able to persuade myself that this was the case. The causes are deeper-seated than any governmental arrangements. They arise from the fact that nature does not endow the race as plentifully with genius as with muscular strength. In a true society these qualities would supplement each other, and genius would serve brawn and brawn would give effect to genius. Moreover, the highest efforts of genius would be to discover and unfold any possibilities of genius or talent among those who, if chances were not given them, would not bring such possibilities to light. But this is not what much of the genius and talent of the world incline to do,—particularly the type I have now specially in mind, the genius and talent for organizing the production of wealth. Those who have this are inclined to use it for themselves, and, instead of *serving* brawn, they buy it out at the cheapest rate. Because the latter is very plentiful, they can buy it out very cheap. This excites resentment in the laborer, for to the extent he thinks at all (and not all do) he knows he is taken advantage of. Hence social division. This and the bitterness that accompany it may go far enough to disrupt society.

Hence society may, if it cares for its welfare or even for its life, interfere in this industrial realm. The community may take up the laborer's cause as its own,—not to give him any unfair advantage, but to keep him from being treated as he so often is now. Conditions might change, and then social duty would be different, but at present this is the shape it takes in my mind. I see no reason for supposing that the free play of supply and demand works justice. I have argued this at such length in my book that I will not repeat myself here. Mr. Yarros simply gives affirmation and definition, but no argument, and he throws no light. It may be true that I have not sufficiently defined justice, and that Mr. Yarros has pointed out a real deficiency in my book to this extent. I will admit that he has. But his own definition of justice is far from satisfying. It is very clear, but one can see all around it and beyond it. I do not deny that one who does more work in a given time may rightfully get more pay, but, when he says that "anything that takes place under free play of supply and demand *is* justice" (by which I understand that in this consists the definition of justice), I cannot follow him even a mile off; and I think he must be subconsciously aware that equal liberty and justice are not identical, else how could he say that "true and complete liberty in the industrial realm would necessarily result in economic justice"? Would this not be tautological unless the two things, liberty and justice, were distinct in idea?

If by freedom we mean the absence of force, I can imagine two men perfectly free, yet one of them, because of his peculiar situation, able to strike an unjust bargain with the other. The familiar example of one who rescues a drowning man is good enough. No force may be exercised by the rescuer, yet his bargain may be to the effect that the person rescued shall be thereafter his slave or turn over to him all his property. The rescued man would evidently at the time think the price none too high,—his life he would prize higher than anything he could part with,—and the rescuer, on the supposition, exercises not the slightest compulsion; yet who would call the bargain a just one? Even if I don't know just what justice would be; even if the endeavor to find an exact equivalent is a foolish one,—I am sure that this is *not* just. Yet, if so, the free play of supply and demand breaks down as a definition or guarantee of justice. And, far-fetched as the illustration is, it is much on a par with what is going on in the industrial world constantly. Individuals are forced by conditions over which they have no control (save in so far as the propagation of the race is checked) to accept whatever terms some men of organizing genius may propose as the alternative to starvation and death. We do not need to wait on an exact formulation of justice to be tolerably sure that this is unjust, and that the element of justice which we have in mind in saying so will have to be taken into account in making the formulation desired, and that no good is gained to science by a simplification which omits it.

Mr. Yarros wonders that I should say that all our prepossessions are in favor of liberty or non-interference in the industrial realm, because this is wholly repugnant to my "great argument from the social organism." But our prepossessions are in favor of liberty or non-interference in every realm, for liberty in itself is always a good and restraint in itself always an evil; and I said as much, directly or by implication, in dealing with defensive war or the protection of life and property as well. Mr. Yarros has some confusion about my use of the "social organism" (the word "organism," I may say, appears only once or twice in my book, and I could have omitted it altogether without hurt to the argument, and I freely confess it suggests many analogies that are misleading). Belief in the social organism or society does not by any means necessitate the conclusion that society (as such) *shall* act, but only that it may act and has the right to act, and even the duty, *when* this is necessary for social ends. But, if private and voluntary action is doing well enough already, there is neither need or duty for it to act, and its right slumbers in abeyance. The only unconditional duty of society is to *see* that social ends are secured, but how they are secured, whether by private action or by its own action, is a matter of indifference to it. On the general principle of social economy, one might rather say that its duty is *not* to act, save as it is obliged to; for private action is always simpler, easier, less wasteful.

Yet, with all said and done, I am extremely grateful to Mr. Yarros for his extended and painstaking criticisms. I admire extremely his controversial cleverness, and wish I had a little of it. I dare say I shall not seem to have met all his objections—certainly I have not singled them all out, sentence by sentence. But I hope I have touched on the main and central ones, and at any rate I have, under great pressure of work, done the best I could.

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